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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH IOM CHIEF

1. SUMMARY: During the Ambassador's meeting Davide Terzi, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Chief of Mission, Terzi said the persistent cultural acceptability of child trafficking and the UNHCR's laggard handling of refugee resettlement significantly hamper IOM programs. Terzi also outlined his development programs in conjunction with Ghanaian expatriates. End Summary.

2. Terzi paid a courtesy call on the Ambassador on December 16. Terzi mentioned his successful programs to prevent trafficking in children, which had thus far resulted in the rescue of 700 victims. Still, Terzi said, cultural barriers remained with traditional rulers and many other Ghanaians describing child trafficking as perfectly normal. Terzi noted that some children as young as three had been recruited and forced to work 15-hour days in the fishing industry, often doing the dangerous underwater work of untangling fishing nets.

2. On the resettlement front, Terzi echoed our disappointment in the pace of refugee referrals coming from UNHCR. In his opinion, taking care of refugees had become a big business, which resettlement could easily threaten. He looked forward to working closely with the Embassy to help us meet our admissions targets for FY 06.

3. Terzi is spearheading an innovative program known as Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA), which harnesses the skills, energy, and training of the diaspora community for the benefit of their home country. He would like to involve more Ghanaian expatriates in short-term teaching assignments, in temporary work details, in a micro-credit lending program for launching small businesses, and in e-learning via tele-conferencing, all of which would help generate sustainable development. It would be a pity if Ghana had not advanced to middle-income status by the next generation, said Terzi.

4. Ambassador thanked Terzi for the meeting and said she looked forward to working with him.

BRIDGEWATER